

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN 2001

To determine the needs of next year's class, educators begin by looking at last year's statistics. Businesses supplying paper, pens, desks, computers, and many other products and services are also interested in the facts about changing school enrollment. Human resource planners look to these numbers to see where the next generation of workers will come from and how well prepared they will be.

In 2001, 8.0 million children were enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten and 33.2 million attended elementary school, according to the October supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS).¹ High schools and colleges had about 16 million students each, as shown in Figure 1.²

¹ For the purposes of this report, elementary school includes grades 1 through 8 and high school includes grades 9 through 12. Estimates from survey data are based on responses from a sample of the population. The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. For more information on the accuracy of the data, see Appendix A.

² The estimates for high school and college enrollment were not statistically different from each other.

Words That Count

Regular schools include public, parochial, and other private schools that advance a student toward an elementary or high school diploma or a college, university, or professional school degree. Trade schools, business colleges, and schools for the mentally handicapped, which do not advance students to regular school degrees, are not included.

Nursery schools, preschools, or prekindergartens are regular schools that provide educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten. Private homes that provide primarily custodial care are not considered nursery schools. Children in Head Start or similar programs are counted under nursery school or kindergarten, as appropriate.

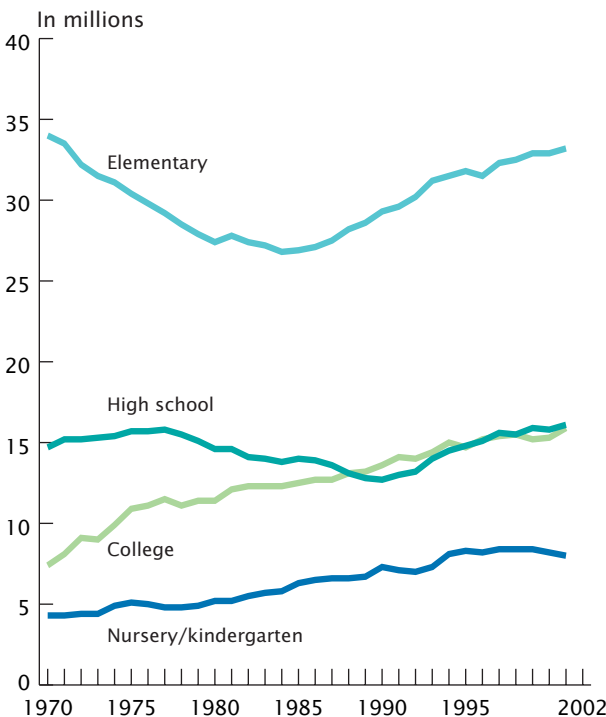
NURSERY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

In 1964, the first year these data were collected, about 500,000 children attended nursery school, compared with 4.3 million in 2001. The majority of non-Hispanic White (55 percent) and Black (59 percent) 3- and 4-year-olds attended nursery school or kindergarten in 2001.³

³ Because Hispanics may be any race, data for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black and Asian and Pacific Islander populations. Based on the population aged 3 and older surveyed in the October CPS, 3.0 percent of the Black population and 1.9 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population were also Hispanic. Data for American Indian and Alaska Native populations are not shown in this section because of the small sample size in the 2001 CPS.

The percentage of non-Hispanic White 3- and 4-year-olds attending nursery school in 2001 was not statistically different from the percentage of Black 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled. The percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander 3- and 4-year-olds who attended nursery school was not statistically different from the Hispanic children of this age who were enrolled.

Figure 1.
**Students by Level of School
Enrollment: 1970 to 2001**



Note: The figures for 1970 and 1971 do not include students aged 35 and older.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1970 to October 2001.

Forty-two percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children this age also attended. The proportion of Hispanic children attending nursery school was 32 percent.

In 2001, 61 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in families with incomes of \$40,000 or more attended school, compared with 43 percent of children this age in families with incomes less than \$20,000.

Among 3- and 4-year-olds, school enrollment was also related to the education and labor force participation of a child's mother. In 2001, children of mothers who were college graduates were more likely to attend nursery school than children whose mothers did not finish high school—68 percent compared with 36 percent. Also, children of mothers in the labor force were more likely to attend school than those whose mothers were not working or looking for work—58 percent compared with 45 percent.⁴

In October 2001, the majority of 5-year-olds were enrolled in school—93 percent. Most 5-year-olds, 73 percent, were in kindergarten. In addition, 14 percent were in nursery school and 6 percent were in first grade.

The total enrollment in kindergarten was 3.7 million in 2001. During the past three decades, the proportion of 3- to-6-year-olds attending kindergarten all day increased from about 1 in 10 to 6 in 10. Additionally, about half of kindergarteners (51 percent) had been enrolled in nursery school in the preceding year.

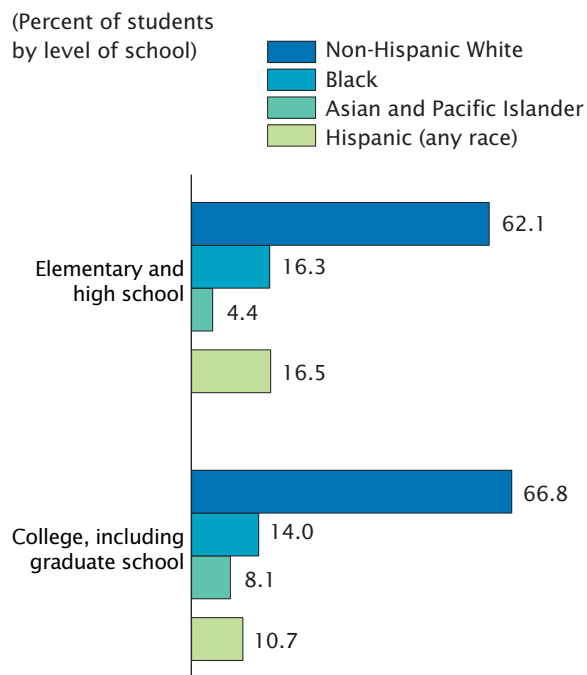
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

The large number of students enrolled in elementary school and high school (49 million) in 2001 was not statistically different from the previous record set in 1970—peak enrollment for the Baby Boom Generation. Immigration has contributed to growing enrollment. Among children aged 5 to 17, 20 percent had at least one foreign-born parent—and 5 percent of elementary and high school students were foreign born themselves.

Students enrolled in elementary and high schools in 2001 were more diverse than the general population, as shown in Figure 2. While the proportion of non-Hispanic Whites was smaller in these schools than in the general population 3 and older (62 percent compared with 70 percent), the proportion of Blacks was larger (16 percent compared with 13 percent). The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islander students (4.5 percent) was not statistically different from the

⁴ The labor force includes people who were employed and those who were unemployed but looking for work.

Figure 2.
Students by Level of School and Race and Hispanic Origin: October 2001



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2001.

proportion of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the general population 3 and older (4.4 percent). Hispanics made up 17 percent of elementary and high school students, compared with 13 percent of the general population 3 and older.⁵

During the 1-year period ending in October 2001, 507,000 students, or 4.7 percent of all students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, dropped out of high school.⁶ The rate was 5.3 percent for boys and 4.1 percent for girls.⁷ The high school dropout rate was larger for Blacks (5.7 percent) than for Asians and Pacific Islanders (2.1 percent) and non-Hispanic Whites (3.8 percent). The dropout rate for Hispanics was 8.1 percent.⁸

⁵ The percentages of Blacks and Hispanics in the general population were not statistically different.

⁶ The dropout rate has remained the same since 1997. The total dropout rate in 2001 was not statistically different from the rate for boys, girls, or the Black population.

⁷ The 2001 dropout rate for boys was not statistically different from the overall rate for the Black population. The rate for girls was not statistically different from the overall rate for non-Hispanic Whites.

⁸ The 2001 dropout rate for Hispanics was not statistically different from the rate for people who lived in households with incomes of less than \$20,000, and the rate for Asians was not statistically different from the rate for people who lived in households with incomes of \$40,000 or more.

The likelihood of dropping out was also higher for students from lower-income families than for students from higher-income families. While 9.0 percent of high school students from families with annual incomes below \$20,000 dropped out, 2.2 percent of those from families with annual incomes of \$40,000 or more left before graduation.

PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Among the population aged 18 to 24 in 2001, 13 percent were no longer in school but had not graduated from high school. Among the 81 percent who were high school graduates, 44 percent were enrolled in college.

In October 2001, 16 million students were enrolled in college, in contrast with 14 million a decade earlier. Students under age 25 represented 62 percent of all college students. Women accounted for 57 percent of all college students, continuing the majority role they established in 1979.

The race and Hispanic composition of college students shifted over the course of two decades. In 1979,

84 percent were non-Hispanic White and 10 percent were Black, compared with 67 percent and 14 percent in 2001. About 2 percent of students were of other races in 1979.⁹ By 2001, Asians and Pacific Islanders accounted for 8 percent of college students. Additionally, Hispanic enrollment grew from 4 percent of college students in 1979 to 11 percent in 2001.¹⁰ In 2001, 13 percent of all U.S. college students were foreign born.

Over one-third of college students were enrolled part-time in 2001, and this rate was higher for women than men—36 percent compared with 32 percent. Older students may need flexibility to schedule their college careers around jobs and families. While 17 percent of students under age 25 attended college part-time, 63 percent of older students did.

⁹ Other races included American Indian and Alaska Native and Asian and Pacific Islander in 1979.

¹⁰ No statistical difference distinguished the percentage of Hispanics in college in 2000 from the percentage of Blacks enrolled in 1979.

POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS, COSTS, AND FINANCIAL AID (1996–1997)

While education has become increasingly important, schooling beyond high school has become increasingly expensive.¹¹ The average cost of in-state tuition, fees, and room and board for a full-time undergraduate student rose from \$2,800 in 1979–80 to \$9,200 in 1996–97, according to the U.S. Department of Education. This amounts to a 228 percent increase during a time when median family income rose 112 percent.

Among full-time students under age 25, 71 percent were claimed as dependents on their parents' income tax returns.¹² Rates of financial dependence were highest among first- and second-year college

students (77 percent) and lowest among graduate students (41 percent).

In addition to receiving financial assistance from their parents, students also supplemented their incomes by working or obtaining financial aid. Seventy-two percent of all full-time, postsecondary students worked either full-time or part-time during the previous 4 months, as shown in Figure 3. Third- and fourth-year college students and graduate students were even more likely to have worked than first- and second-year college students or vocational, technical, and business school students.

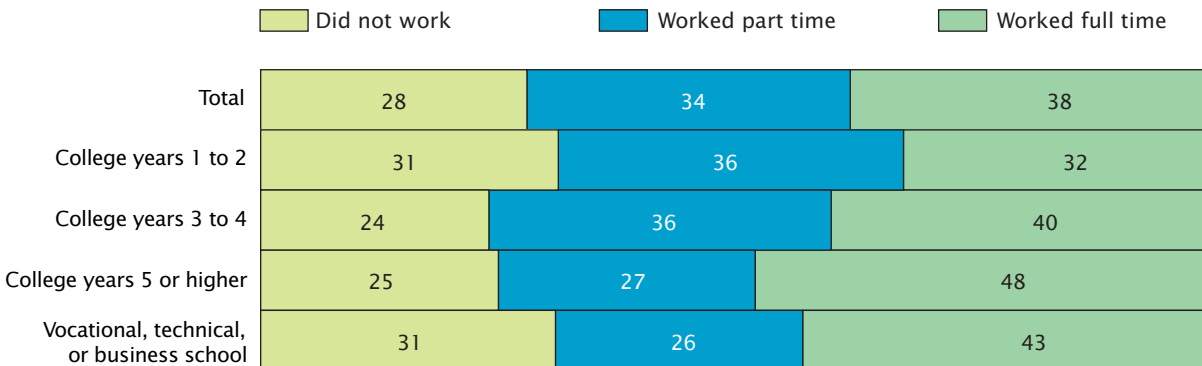
The majority of full-time, postsecondary students (62 percent) received some form of financial aid during the year, including student loans, grants, fellowships, scholarships, work-study appointments, Veterans Educational Assistance, employer assistance, and other sources. Among students who received aid, the average amount was about \$6,000, covering an average of 62 percent of their total costs.

¹¹ See discussion on estimates of work-life earnings in chapter on educational attainment.

¹² Data for this section of the report come from the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation and the 1997 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The two datasets were linked by their common variable, the name of the respondent's postsecondary institution. Linking the two data files allowed an examination of student characteristics and financial aid receipt by institutional characteristics.

Figure 3.
Work Status in the Last 4 Months for Full-Time Postsecondary Students by Enrollment Level: 1996–1997

(Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Panel, Wave 5.

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

For more detailed information, consult the following U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports: *School—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1999* (P20-533) by Amie Jamieson, Andrea Curry, and Gladys Martinez and *Financing the Future—Postsecondary Students, Costs, and Financial Aid: 1996–1997* (P70-83) by Scott Boggess and Camille Ryan.

Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>. Click on "S" and select "School Enrollment."

Contact the Census Bureau's Customer Service Center at 301-763-INFO (4636) or e-mail <pop@census.gov>.